

NOAA Diversity Council Meeting Minutes
August 2, 2002
Silver Spring, Maryland

Members in Attendance: Scott Gudes, Barbara Marshall_Bailey, Helen Hurcombe, B. Carzell Cody, Cheryl Malone, John Jones, Louisa Koch, Mary Glackin, Lamont Jackson, Zane Schauer, John Oliver, Alfred A. Corea, Jim Martin for Bob Taylor, Jamie Hawkins, Robert Ebaugh, Sim Aberson, Barbara Brenkworth, Melanie Fields-Jones, Lynne Phipps, Toni Hollingsworth,

Opening Remarks

- Minutes from the June 14th, 2002 Diversity Council meeting were reviewed and approved.
- Question raised about training of facilitators
- Scott raised question. Do we want SFA questions in the official minutes to go on website, such as direct quotes.
- Some members agreed that everything should be shared with NOAA.
- Barbara raised question about SFA questions being pass code protected.
- Scott withdrew question.

Worklife Center

Stephanie Jones from the Office of Diversity presented the Council with feedback solicited from NOAA Facilitator Cadre members who work in the Field, on ways to expand worklife services to Field employees. Some of the suggestions included the following:

- Have worklife speakers go to field locations where there are high concentrations of workers
- Post alternate work schedules on the Employee Worklife web site
- Send packets of information by mail to NOAA Field offices on the Worklife Center and its services
- Send out a quarterly email message to all employees on a unique service offered by the Worklife Center
- Encourage increased support at management levels to encourage people to use services
- Train managers on the benefits of a worklife program
- Establish areas on ships for employees to de-stress
- Create a supervisory support structure to allow employees to go to the Centers
- Model fisheries web site– includes transportation, standards of conduct, worklife center, human resources, etc.

The Council was also presented with three contracting options to best address ways to expand worklife services to Field employees.

1. Request that contractors submit a proposal describing how they will develop, implement and

manage a worklife center that suits the needs of both Headquarters and Field employees

2. Request that a second full-time worklife advisor/consultant to be devoted exclusively to Field worklife services and sessions

3. Solicit bids to manage the Headquarters Center and place advisors in each ASC site
Scott Gudes ask is it realistic to have someone travel around for WLC. Barbara Marshall-Bailey suggested to come up with attendees for people in the field who want to see live people. Question was raised, can people in field handle worklife issues if they had a budget? How do we give service to people who are so spread out? Maybe its unrealistic to manage it here. Louisa Koch expressed that worklife services should be distributed equitably among Headquarters and Filed employees.

ACTION: The Diversity Council decided to go with the first option, to ask experienced worklife professionals to describe how they will develop, implement and manage a Worklife Center that best suits the needs of all NOAA employees. The Office of Diversity will prepare the necessary requirements documentation and the statement of work which will be shared with the Council.

NWS Presentation-Update on SFA Results and Performance

NWS Diversity Liaison Steve Smith gave an update of his findings on a study comparing SFA survey results for NWS offices in the top ten and lower ten according to flash flood and severe thunderstorm warning performance metrics and the usage of sick leave. It was found that the offices whose SFA results were high, had a lower level of sick leave usage. Therefore, it was concluded that the NWS saves money where diversity is managed better.

Presentation –Turn around in SFA Results from Morehead City, NC Forecast Office

Tom Kriehn from Morehead City, NC demonstrated how SFA results changed him as an individual and discussed the increase in SFA results from 1998 to 2002. The areas where changes have been implemented are:

- Awards
- Alternate Work Schedule
- Employee Involvement
- Increased Communication
- Increased employee responsiveness
- Increase in core responsibilities and associated staffing increase
- Staffing change
- Priority Placed on innovation and PME in a nutshell
- Eastern Region Leadership Initiative

As a result of these changes there was a boost in morale.

MEETING ADJOURNED BECAUSE OF FIRE DRILL

MEETING RESUMED with Louisa Koch acting as Chair

Diversity Council Members Discussion of Write- In Responses (SFA 2002)

Barbara Marshall-Bailey stated that there are trends in the write-in comments. In OMAO quality of worklife is a trend and in NESDIS it's the Demo Project. Barbara is still working on NWS – OAR and NOS are doing their own. She's pulling together redundant write-ins. NWS has over 2,000 entries, NESDIS has over 536.

Barbara stated that all executives expressed that employees need to see the comments in some form. The format sent out was for council eyes. Zane Schauer indicated that Barbara took out names but left in titles which could still identify people. Barbara explained that to take out the titles would cause her to rewrite the comments and she wasn't going to do that. All executives on the Council wanted to get raw data.

Louisa stated that people in leadership positions need to be prepared for the comments. Bob said that the comments were very useful. Louisa Koch expressed that she would like to see some steps to address bottom ten.

Action: Each line office should report back how they are handling write-ins and provide a summary of where they are. Barbara has categorized them and issued to Executives and SFA contacts.

SFA Status- Elevated Issues & Action Plans

Louisa stated that there were low scores on the organization not responding to SFA. A proposal was made that Barbara create a strategic plan for employee on-line focus groups to help explore strategies to address the bottom ten. Louisa indicated that she would like the Council to see that SFA results are included in performance plans.

It was proposed that Barbara create a strategy to incorporate SFA results in performance plans.

Barbara explained executives took the initiative to look at the Bottom 10 in five categories, looked at their own line office bottom ten and folded in those consistent with NOAA-wide Bottom Ten.

It was proposed that an all employee e-mail be sent, soliciting interest in participating in one of the five focus groups. From the entries, a diverse mix of employees will be selected to participate in an on-line chat for each category (there are five categories.) At the conclusion of

the on-line chat the findings will be consolidated and recommendations will be made. The focus groups will be facilitated.

Louisa Koch volunteered to take the Bottom-Ten focal group and suggested that someone on the Council should be part of all of the focal groups.

Mary Glackin mentioned that there is an SES retreat in scheduled for October 24 -26 in Leesburg, VA and time has been set aside for SFA. An expectation could be that SFA will be linked to performance and output. Steve Smith and Tom Kriehn were asked to give a joint 30 minute presentation on SFA.

Louisa said that she would like Barbara to send an analysis of grouping the Bottom 10 categories and ask that it be part of the focus groups. Louisa would like the Council engaged by the end of September. Proposed time line for starting the focus groups is the end of August to the first week in September.

Barbara will send the Council a time-line early next week..

It was proposed that Barbara create a strategy for the on-line chat room, establish 5 focus groups (people from every field & line office).

It was expressed that there is a need for Barbara to do a NOAA-wide presentation to show the correlation of SFA satisfaction. Louisa would like to see what Steve Smith has done expanded NOAA-wide.

It was proposed that Barbara look at an OAR Lab for those eligible for retirement within one year, by occupation.

MEETING ADJOURNED

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS ITEMS:

Action: Solicit for experienced worklife professionals to describe how they will develop, implement and manage a Worklife Center that best suits the needs of all NOAA employees. The Office of Diversity will prepare the necessary requirements documentation and the statement of work which will be shared with the Council.

Action: Each line office should report back how they are handling write-ins and provide a summary of where they are. Barbara has categorized them and issued to Executives and SFA contacts.